11 August 2020

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Stuart Robert, today announced additional temporary measures for NDIS participants and providers in Victoria to ensure continuity of services in a COVIDSafe setting.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has created a panel of four large experienced disability providers to offer additional workforce support for participants living in residential support settings. These providers are able to offer advice, support staff and isolation accommodation for smaller organisations to access as needed due to the impact of COVID-19.

In addition, Aspen Medical has been appointed to provide a clinical first response for any identified outbreak, which will ensure that infection control procedures, personal protective equipment (PPE) and nursing support is in place for residents and workers, if needed.

Minister Robert said the NDIA continues to work closely with the Victorian Government to ensure NDIS participants and providers directly impacted by the coronavirus have the necessary supports in place, including those in residential support settings.

‘It is the Government’s priority to ensure continuity of supports along with the health and wellbeing of NDIS participants and their support workers,’ Mr Robert said.

‘We have a clear plan and will continue to respond to changing circumstances across the entire country to ensure all NDIS participants are supported and are safe during the pandemic.’

Further to today’s announcement, the Australian Government has also put in place other measures to support providers to ensure the ongoing delivery of support to NDIS participants. This includes outreach calls to providers of residential support and ongoing communication with disability services sector and advocates to identify and resolve issues.

The NDIA has initiated proactive outreach to more than 7,000 high-risk NDIS participants in Victoria to check-in on their wellbeing and ensure they are accessing the supports they need. This includes NDIS participants living in residential aged care facilities.

Minister Robert has previously announced New South Wales and Victorian NDIS participants can purchase necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) using their NDIS plan where appropriate. NDIS providers in New South Wales and Victoria can also claim for PPE used when delivering face-to-face supports assisting participants with daily living.

NDIS providers and self-managed participants who are unable to source PPE through their normal supply channels are also able to access PPE from the National Medical Stockpile. As of 7 August, this has resulted in the distribution of more than 190,290 items of PPE from the National Medical Stockpile to 262 organisations delivering support to NDIS participants. This is in addition to items distributed by the Victorian Government.

Disability support workers in Victoria who are directed to self-isolate or quarantine are, where eligible, also able to access the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment.

Coordination at the Commonwealth level is being led through the NDIS Critical Response Group to ensure the rapid identification and resolution of policy and operational issues. Through this group, the Australian Government will continue to monitor the situation in Victoria and across Australia to ensure NDIS participants, their families and workers receive the support and care they need during these testing times.

The Commonwealth is also continuing to work closely with the Victorian Government through its Disability Rapid Response Group (DRRG). The DRRG is actively monitoring and rapidly responding to any incidence of COVID-19 amongst people with a disability and service providers.

NDIS participants who have questions or whose circumstances may have changed are encourage to contact the NDIA on 1800 800 110 to discuss their needs or to seek further information.

NDIS providers who have questions about delivering quality and safe supports and services to NDIS participants during the coronavirus pandemic should contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission on 1800 035 544.

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